



NEWS RELEASE

Congressman Walter B. Jones

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FEDERAL INVESTIGATORS FIND SEXUAL AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION BY UNC PROFESSOR

Jones call for investigation leads to Department of Education's harassment and discrimination report

Washington, D.C.- Third District Representative Walter B. Jones called for a comprehensive overhaul of UNC policies by administrators after today's historic report from the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Education finding that actions by a UNC professor constituted a civil rights violation.

In February, UNC- Chapel Hill professor Elyse Crystall, sent a mass e-mail to students enrolled in her English 22 class charging that one of her students was a "white, heterosexist, Christian male" who felt "entitled to make violent, heterosexist comments." The student had expressed - during a discussion lead by Ms. Crystall on the subject of "Why do heterosexual men feel threatened by homosexuals" - his religiously-grounded belief that homosexuality was not a desirable lifestyle. Crystall branded the student's opinion to be "violent, heterosexist comments", and declared from her government e-mail account that "no hate speech would be tolerated".

"The e-mail message not only subjected the Student to intentional discrimination and harassment, but also discouraged the robust exchange of ideas that is intrinsic to higher education and is at the very heart of the Constitution's protection of free speech," the Office of Civil Rights report said.

"What Ms. Crystall did was appalling," Jones said. "As Americans, we have no greater freedom than our freedom of speech. It is our fundamental right, and it is despicable that a professor would attempt to strip that right from a student in a classroom environment. UNC absolutely must review their policies as to why a teacher like Ms. Crystall was allowed to remain and teach at UNC for months after such an egregious violation of a student's right to speak. I call upon Chancellor Moeser and other members of the Administration to conduct an immediate review of the university's policies."

After meeting with Department of Education officials and reviewing their ten page report, Jones concluded: "This thorough, five month investigation by federal authorities details the unchecked power of university professors. As a parent and concerned citizen I cannot see why this professor should be allowed to maintain her position of authority over students at one of the nation's most respected universities."

For additional information or to schedule an interview with Congressman Walter B. Jones please contact Kristen Quigley at (202) 225-3415.